

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ROME
INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY BONN
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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PCAT, NATO, US, UR
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SUBJECT: US-SOVIET TALKS ON CONVENTIONAL ARMS TRANSFER
ISSUES -

REF: STATE

1. THE US AND THE USSR HELD DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON,

DECEMBER 14-19 ON CONVENTIONAL ARMS TRANSFER ISSUES.

2. FYI: FRG, UK AND FRENCH AMBASSADORS WERE DEBRIEFED IN DEPARTMENT BY PM DIRECTOR GELB.

3. FOR NATO: FOR USE AS APPROPRIATE

4. FOR CAPITALS: YOU SHOULD SEEK APPOINTMENT AT APPROPRIATE LEVEL TO PROVIDE A GENERAL DEBRIEF ON THE TALKS. YOU SHOULD TAKE ANY DETAILED QUESTIONS AND FORWARD THEM TO DEPARTMENT. TALKING POINTS FOLLOW:

-- THE US AND THE USSR HELD PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON FROM DECEMBER 14-19 ON THE LIMITATION OF CONVENTIONAL ARMS TRANSFERS; THE SOVIETS PREFERRED TO REFER TO THESE DISCUSSIONS AS "PRELIMINARY" RATHER THAN THE FIRST MEETING OF A US-SOVIET WORKING GROUP ON THIS SUBJECT. WE HAD NO OBJECTION TO THIS.

-- THE TALKS WERE PART OF OUR EFFORTS TO MOVE FORWARD TOWARD THE PRESIDENT'S OBJECTIVE OF REDUCING THE VOLUME AND SOPHISTICATION OF CONVENTIONAL ARMS TRANSFERS. THIS REQUIRES THE COOPERATION OF OTHER SUPPLIERS AND RECIPIENTS.

-- BECAUSE THE US AND THE USSR ARE THE TWO LARGEST SUPPLIERS OF ARMS TO THE THIRD WORLD, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT
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THE TWO COUNTRIES BEGIN TO DISCUSS THIS ISSUE.

-- THE DISCUSSIONS WERE EXPLORATORY AND GENERAL IN NATURE. WE DID NOT SEEK TO REACH ANY AGREEMENTS.

-- THE U.S. EXPLAINED ITS ARMS TRANSFER POLICY AT LENGTH AND IDENTIFIED WHAT WE BELIEVE TO BE COMMON CONCERNS OF THE TWO COUNTRIES. WE POINTED OUT POTENTIAL DANGERS THAT COULD RESULT FROM UNRESTRAINED TRANSFERS.

-- IN EXPLAINING OUR POLICY, WE DISCUSSED THE GUIDELINES THAT THE U.S. IS FOLLOWING, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING WHICH COULD FORM THE BASIS FOR A MUTUAL APPROACH.

- NO FIRST INTRODUCTION OF ADVANCED EQUIPMENT THAT WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASE THE COMBAT CAPABILITY IN A REGION;

- RESTRAINTS ON TRANSFERS OF CERTAIN WEAPONS WHICH ARE PARTICULARLY SUSCEPTIBLE TO MISUSE BY TERRORISTS;

- RESTRAINTS ON CO-PRODUCTION AGREEMENTS OF
ADVANCED SYSTEMS; AND

- CONTROLS ON THIRD PARTY TRANSFERS

-- THE U.S. ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THIS IS A COMPLEX AND DIFFICULT SUBJECT, AND THAT MEANINGFUL PROGRESS WILL TAKE TIME.

-- THE US NOTED THAT NEITHER WE NOR THE SOVIETS SHOULD BE EXPECTED TO DISADVANTAGE OUR RESPECTIVE FRIENDS AND ALLIES OR TO JEOPARDIZE OUR NATIONAL SECURITY INTERESTS. "LEGITIMATE" SECURITY NEEDS OF BUYERS SHOULD BE MET.

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-- THE SOVIETS ASKED MANY QUESTIONS ABOUT US POLICY AND OUR APPROACH TO THE ISSUES OF RESTRAINT.

-- THE U.S. INDICATED THAT WE THOUGHT THE MOST USEFUL APPROACH WAS TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE HARMONIZATION OF NATIONAL GUIDELINES (THE LONDON-NUCLEAR SUPPLIERS GROUP APPROACH)

RATHER THAN TO SEEK QUANTITATIVE LIMITATIONS, EVEN THOUGH WE, FOR OUR OWN PURPOSES, HAD ADOPTED A CEILING.

-- THE SOVIETS APPROACHED THE TALKS WITH SOME SKEPTICISM; NEVERTHELESS, THEY AGREED TO ASSESS THE RESULTS OF THE WASHINGTON TALKS AND TO CONSULT WITH US AS TO THE NEXT MEETING.

-- WE ARE OPTIMISTIC THAT WE CAN DEVELOP AN ONGOING DIALOGUE THAT MAY ENABLE US, OVER TIME, TO CONVINCE THEM THAT COOPERATIVE APPROACHES TOWARD RESTRAINT OBJECTIVES ARE IN THEIR INTEREST AS WELL AS OUR OWN.

-- THE U.S. CLEARLY NOTED THAT OUR ABILITY TO SUSTAIN OUR OWN POLICY OF RESTRAINT WAS DEPENDENT, IN PART, ON ACHIEVING THE COOPERATION OF OTHER SUPPLIERS AND RECIPIENTS.

5. IN VIEW OF SENSITIVITY OF THESE TALKS, PLEASE REQUEST THAT CONFIDENTIALITY BE PROTECTED. VANCE

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